

Gutman-Wise Building
3140 M Street, N.W.
Georgetown
Washington
District of Columbia

HABS No. DC-117

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Washington Planning and Service Center
1730 North Lynn Street
Arlington, Virginia

GUTMAN-WISE BUILDING

Location: 3140 M Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Present Owner: William J. O'Donnell; 4801 Blagden Avenue, N.W.,
Washington, D.C.

Present Occupant: The Door Store

Present Use: Furniture Store

Statement of Significance: This building is atypical of Georgetown commercial architecture. It represents an early twentieth-century trend, and its broad fenestration is an interesting and significant harbinger of modern design.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners: The following information is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure was built. The site is in Square 1199; Lot 810 formerly known as lot 7 and part of lot 5 in a subdivision of lot 50 on a plat which appears in the book of Georgetown Squares in the Office of the Surveyor, District of Columbia. The lot is described as follows:

"...beginning at a point in the South line of M Street distant 75' East from the Northwest corner of said square and running thence East along said street 25' thence South parallel with the East line of Wisconsin Avenue 120' thence West parallel with the South line of M Street 25' thence North 120' to the place of beginning."

1811 Deed April 8, 1811, recorded June 6, 1811 in
Liber AA, folio 357.

David Peter et ux Sarah

To

President and Director
Union Bank of Georgetown

"late the property of Robert Peter, the elder."

1811 Deed April 20, 1811, recorded June 6, 1811 in
Liber AA folio 361.

George Peter et ux Ann

To

President and Director

- Union Bank of Georgetown
"Late the property of Robert Peter, the elder."
1825 Deed November 15, 1825, recorded December 16, 1825
in Liber WB 14, folio 379.
President and Director
Union Bank of Georgetown
To
John Beall Claggett
1826 Deed March 24, 1826, recorded March 31, 1826 in
Liber WB 16, folio 274
John Beall Claggett
To
Richard Osbourn
1844 Deed July 17, 1843, recorded January 18, 1844 in
Liber WB 104, folio 457.
Joseph Helm, Trustee
Richard Osbourn et ux Margaret
To
Judson Mitchell
1863 Deed June 23, 1863, recorded June 24, 1863 in
Liber NCT 7, folio 375.
Judson Mitchell
To
Emanuel Gutman
1868 Trust March 13, 1868, recorded March 14, 1868 in
Liber NCT 9, folio 344.
Emanuel Gutman et ux May
To
James W. Corcoran
Albert E. Mathews
1879 Deed October 1, 1879, recorded November 24, 1879
in Liber 924, folio 71.
James W. Corcoran
Albert E. Mathews
Trustees under Deed of Trust
for Emanuel Gutman et ux
(sale for default)
To
Henry C. Craig
Albert B. Jackson
Tenants in common.
"Sold after public advertisement on October 1,
1879 for \$10,160."
1909 Deed November 27, 1909, recorded November 30, 1909
in Liber 3277, folio 396.
Henry C. Craig et ux Mary A.
Albert B. Jackson et ux Josephine A.
To
George W. Wise

1939 Deed December 1, 1939, recorded December 4, 1939
in Liber 7418 folio 357
William F. Taylor
B. Agee Bowles
Trustees under the Will of George W. Wise,
deceased
To
William J. O'Donnell et ux Mary A.
Tenants by entirety.

2. Date of erection: The only documentation found seemed to indicate that this building was built by Emmanuel Gutman 1868-70. (Assessments for Real and Personal Property 1865-1870, Records of the City of Georgetown, D. C., National Archives, Record Group 351, Microcopy M 605, Roll #12) Recorded as follows: Ground - \$2,500; Improvements - large 3-story brick dwelling, store and back building - \$6,000; Brick stable in rear on 1st alley - \$500. Hence the Gutman identification has been retained for this structure. However, since the above documentation clearly does not refer to the present 4-story structure and since all architectural evidence in situ indicates a post-1900 date, it seems most probable that the present building was erected around 1909 when ownership of the property was transferred to George W. Wise.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: None known.
5. Notes on alterations: Recent alterations are recorded in the District Building Permit Office as follows:

5/16/51	A19966	Repair flooring and steps - fire damage - \$1,500.00.
6/13/52	A32510	(3132-3140) cut openings in party wall and enclose heater room, build interior stairs as/plans, install boiler room vent duct - \$1,500.00. 3140 has occupancy permit for lower two floors only.
11/20/52	A37856	Cut concrete freight ramp in ground floor receiving room; agent for owner is given as Katherine O'Donnell, 4801 Blagden Avenue, N.W. - \$300.00 four floors.
12/ 1/52	A38056	Toilet room - \$500.00.
1/10/53	A38989	Repair (sidewalk) - \$100.00.
6. Important old views: None.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

Washington directories provide the following tenant information:

1911-1922	J. F. Darcy and Co., furniture
1923-1926	Kenderick-Harrison Furniture Co.
1927-1931	William E. Miller Furniture Co.
1933-1937	Sears Roebuck & Co.
1938-1940	Vacant
1941-1948	Western Auto Supply Co.
1960-1966	Door Store, furniture

Prepared by Dr. James Philip Noffsinger
Architect
National Park Service
August 15, 1966

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: An unusual structure for Georgetown, the Gutman-Wise Building typifies an increasingly rationalistic and functional early twentieth-century approach in commercial design. Formal architectural reminiscences of the past are minimized for the sake of maximum window areas, a concept prophetic of much current construction.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 25' (one triple bay) x approximately 105' (including additions to the south); four stories in height.

2. Foundations: Brick to grade.

3. Wall construction: Dark red common bond brick of (north) facade is painted grey. Two brick first-floor piers support a lintel masked by tin stamped to resemble stone. The remarkably open upper facade is framed by brick applied pilasters rising two and one half stories from second-floor level. Unconventional pilaster capitals are tin. A stilted segmental arch masked by voussoir-and-keystone-patterned tin supports shallow brick spandrels contiguous with coping wall behind cornice. Rear additions are common bond brick with headers at six-course intervals.

4. Chimneys: 1'-8" square brick chimney projects slightly from east wall; one-foot beveled cement cap and clay pot rise above projecting upper brick course.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Single-paned wooden door is set within shop front at west side. Rear access through modern wooden screen door opens into garage; overhead door spans nearly the entire south elevation of this addition.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Plate-glass shop window projects to form rectilinear bay in plan, roofed by original metal marquee. Upper front windows rise approximately full height of stories. Set within single rectangular apertures between panelled recessed lintels, they are divided into single-paned triads by wooden mullions. Rear windows have three-over-three-light vertical-muntined double-hung wooden sash, stone sills, and I-beam lintels. They are divided into four-part units by wooden mullions and are strictly functional in design. No shutters.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Roof slopes gently to the south, is tin covered.
 - b. Framing: Wooden framing was reinforced (apparently in 1956) with steel.
 - c. Cornice, eaves: Freely interpreted classical cornice of stamped tin projects moderately and is visually supported by two sets of paired consoles.
 - d. Dormers: None.
- C. Technical Description of Interiors: All four floors are unobstructed except for four load-bearing columns running north-south in the center of the building. Straight-flight stairways are centrally located along west wall on each level. Flooring is irregular-width planking, walls are plastered (except for wainscoting on third floor level), first floor ceiling is covered by decorative patterned tin.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The Gutman-Wise Building faces north onto M Street, N.W. between 31st Street and Wisconsin Avenue, one block north of the C & O Canal. The buildings to the east and west are smaller than the Gutman Building, which appears the dominant structure.
2. Enclosures: None.
3. Outbuildings: Two later additions were built to the south: one, three stories in height is of common bond brick with headers every six courses; the second is of similar construction, one story in height. Apparently built as a garage, it is now used as a loading dock and receiving area.
4. Walks: Fronts on concrete public sidewalk to the north.
5. Landscaping: None.

Prepared by Thomas R. Martinson
Student Assistant Architect
National Park Service
September 7, 1966